IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1 and 28, and cancel Claims 67 and 76-77 without prejudice as
follows:

1. (Currently amended)   A method for delivery of programming content to a
plurality of user terminals over a communications network, comprising:

detecting an indicator indicative of an event <u>present within the signal for</u> [[in]] the
delivery of the programming content;

in response to [[a]] <u>the</u> detection of the indicator, generating a list of individual ones of
the plurality of user terminals currently receiving the programming content;

obtaining data descriptive of at least one group of members of the list;

generating substantially in real time at least one programming segment based at least on
the data; and

providing, to the at least one group, the at least one programming segment in lieu of at
least a portion of the programming content during the event.

2. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the indicator contains a message which
includes a start time of the event.

3. (Original)   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

identifying available transmission channels in the network; and

transmitting the at least one programming segment over at least one of the available
transmission channels.

4. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the event includes an advertisement
break.

5. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the indicator includes a digital program
insertion (DPI) cue.

6. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one programming segment
comprises one or more advertisements.

7. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the network includes a two-way multi-
channel delivery network.

8. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the network includes a cable TV network.

9. (Previously presented)   A method for delivering a program stream containing programming material over a communications network to a plurality of user terminals, comprising:

5   detecting, in the program stream, a message indicating a scheduled programming segment;

in response to a detection of the message, identifying a set of user terminals currently receiving the program stream;

identifying one or more groups of user terminals within the set of user terminals currently

10   receiving the program stream;

generating, subsequent to and based at least in part on identifying one or more groups of user terminals within the set of user terminals currently receiving the program stream, one or more data streams containing one or more alternate programming segments for substituting the scheduled programming segment;

15   directing at least one user terminal in a selected one of the one or more groups to tune from a first transmission channel to a second transmission channel at the start of the scheduled programming segment;

transmitting at least one of the data streams over the second transmission channel; and

directing the at least one user terminal in the selected one of the groups to re-tune to the

20   first transmission channel at the end of the scheduled programming segment.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the scheduled programming segment comprises one or more advertisements.

11. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the message includes a start time of the scheduled programming segment.

25   12. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the message includes a DPI cue.

13. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein at least one of the alternate programming segments comprises advertisements.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the one or more groups are identified by

30   analyzing demographic data associated with the user terminals in the set.

16. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the one or more groups are identified as a function of at least the number of available transmission channels in the network.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the one or more groups are identified also as a function of the number of additional scheduled programming segments expected to occur concurrently with the scheduled programming segment.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the one or more groups are identified also as a function of the number of additional program streams expected to be delivered concurrently with the program stream during the scheduled programming segment.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the additional program streams utilize a subset of the available transmission channels.

20. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising determining a subset of the available transmission channels for carrying the one or more data streams.

21. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the network includes a two-way multi-channel delivery network.

22. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the network includes a cable TV network.

23. - 27. (Cancelled)

28. (Currently amended)   A system for delivering programming content over a communications network, comprising:

a detector for detecting an indicator present in the programming content indicative of an event in the delivery of selected programming content;

a processing unit, responsive to a detection of the indicator, for generating a list of an audience currently receiving the selected programming content, data being obtained which is descriptive of at least one group of members of the audience;

a server for generating at least one programming segment based at least on the data; and

a mechanism for providing, to the at least one group, the at least one programming segment in lieu of at least a portion of the selected programming content during the event;

wherein at least one of a plurality of transmission channels is utilized for the delivery of only the selected programming content, the plurality of transmission channels not being utilized for delivery of programming content which has not been selected by at least one user; and

wherein at least one of remaining ones of the plurality of transmission channels are utilized for the delivery of the at least one programming segment.

29. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the indicator contains a message which includes a start time of the event.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the event includes an advertisement
5   break.

32. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the indicator includes a DPI cue.

33. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the at least one programming segment comprises one or more advertisements.

34. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the network includes a two-way multi-
10   channel delivery network.

35. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the network includes a cable TV network.

36. (Previously presented) A system for delivering a program stream containing programming material over a communications network to a plurality of user terminals,
15   comprising:

a module for dynamically assigning transmission channels;

a detector for detecting, in the program stream, a message indicating a scheduled programming segment;

a processing unit responsive to a detection of the message, for identifying a set of one or
20   more user terminals which is currently receiving the program stream, and grouping said identified set of one or more terminals into one or more groups based on at least one characteristic, the at least one characteristic comprising a function of at least the number of available transmission channels in the network;

a server for generating one or more data streams containing one or more alternate
25   programming segments for substituting the scheduled programming segment within the program stream, said alternate programming segment not being present in the programming schedule prior to said detecting; and

a mechanism for providing at least one of the data streams over a dynamically assigned transmission channel to a selected one of the groups.

30   37. (Original) The system of claim 36, wherein the scheduled programming segment comprises one or more advertisements.

38. (Original) The system of claim 36, wherein the message includes a start time of the scheduled programming segment.

39. (Original) The system of claim 36, wherein the message includes a DPI cue.

40. (Original) The system of claim 36, wherein at least one of the alternate programming segments comprises advertisements.

41. (Original) The system of claim 36, wherein at least one user terminal in the selected group is directed to tune from a first transmission channel to a second transmission channel at the start of the scheduled programming segment, and to re-tune to the first transmission channel at the end of the scheduled programming segment, the at least one data stream being transmitted over the second transmission channel.

42. (Previously presented) The system of claim 36, wherein the at least one characteristic comprises demographic data associated with the user terminals in the set.

43. (Cancelled)

44. (Previously presented) The system of claim 36, wherein the at least one characteristic also comprises a function of the number of additional scheduled programming segments expected to occur concurrently with the scheduled programming segment.

45. (Previously presented) The system of claim 36, wherein the at least one characteristic also comprises a function of the number of additional program streams expected to be delivered concurrently with the program stream during the scheduled programming segment.

46. (Original) The system of claim 45, wherein the additional program streams utilize a subset of the available transmission channels.

47. (Previously presented) The system of claim 36, wherein a subset of the available transmission channels for carrying the one or more data streams is determined.

48. (Original) The system of claim 36, wherein the network includes a two-way multi-channel delivery network.

49. (Original) The system of claim 36, wherein the network includes a cable TV network.

50. - 59. (Cancelled)

60. (Previously presented) A system for providing targeted advertisements over a communications network, the communications network comprising a plurality of transmission channels, a selected one of the transmission channels delivering at least a program stream

containing programming content to one or more of a plurality of users according to a schedule, the system comprising:

a detector for detecting an indicator indicative of an advertising segment within the programming content;

5   a processing unit responsive to a detection of the indicator, for generating a list of an audience receiving the programming content during the scheduled presentation of the programming content, one or more groups of the audience being identified;

a server for allocating one or more available transmission channels for conveying at least one advertisement data stream, the number of available transmission channels allocated being a

10   function of the number of the groups and the number of program channels currently being requested by the audience during the scheduled presentation of the programming content; and

a mechanism for providing, over the allocated one or more transmission channels, the at least one advertisement data stream which contains one or more advertisements targeted at a selected group of the plurality of users, in lieu of providing the advertising segment within the

15   programming content;

wherein said one or more advertisements are not present within the programming schedule prior to said detecting;

wherein the available transmission channels comprise transmission channels which are allocated using switched broadcast techniques; and

20   wherein, based at least in part on current requests for the programming content, a second at least one advertisement data stream is provided in lieu of the advertising segment within the programming content, the second at least one advertisement data stream containing alternative advertisements targeted at a second selected group of the plurality of users.

61. (Previously presented)   The system of claim 60, wherein the indicator contains a

25   message which includes a start time of the advertising segment.

62. (Previously presented)   The system of claim 60, wherein the indicator includes a DPI cue.

63. (Previously presented)   The system of claim 60, wherein the network includes a two-way multi-channel delivery network.

30   64. (Previously presented)   The system of claim 60, wherein the network includes a cable TV network.

65. (Cancelled)

66. (Previously presented)   The method of Claim 1, wherein said programming content comprises advertising and non-advertising content.

67. – 77. (Cancelled)

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